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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to discover the workload policy for full-time counselors at each California community college and to compare them to see what variability existed. The response rate to questionnaires sent to all California community colleges was 79 per cent. Workloads were found to range from 15 to 40 hours per week. It is believed that the load policy of counselors is affected by power politics, as it is much more variable for counselors than for instructors. There is an indication that the present variance will diminish over time. Some pressure toward a more uniform load policy is the result of counselors seeing themselves and their profession as distinct, and seeing value in cooperative efforts designed to preserve and enhance their status. (CA)

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HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK ARE FULL-TIME COMMUNITY COLLEGE COUNSELORS EXPECTED TO WORK?

EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT IN CALIFORNIA NO UNIFORM LOAD EXISTS.

Submitted

by

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April, 1971

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

JC 710 074

How Many Hours Per Week Are Full-Time Community College Counselors Expected To Work?

Evidence Indicates That In California No Uniform Load Exists.

By Donald L. Kester

Whenever counselors meet at conferences, the following exchange can be heard:

"We work forty hours a week at my college."

"Really, we are expected to work only twenty!"

It was decided that a disparity of this magnitude required more detailed investigation. A researchable question emerged: "What is the counseling load policy in the various California Community Colleges?"

In an effort to find the answer, all of the community colleges in the State of California were asked to respond to a mailed questionnaire. This questionnaire focused on ascertaining the colleges' load policy for their full-time counselors. A few colleges were known to employ counselors on a part-time basis only, so the questionnaire asked the colleges to make explicit their load policy for full-time counseling, whether or not full-time counselors were used. The major quest was to discover the load policy for full-time counseling at each of the California Community Colleges, and then compare these different policies to see what variability did exist. The response rate for the questionnaire was 79%.

A cover letter was of course included with the mailed questionnaire. This letter promised to make the individual colleges' responses and the overall distribution available by placing these results in ERIC. The overall distribution is shown in Table 1,

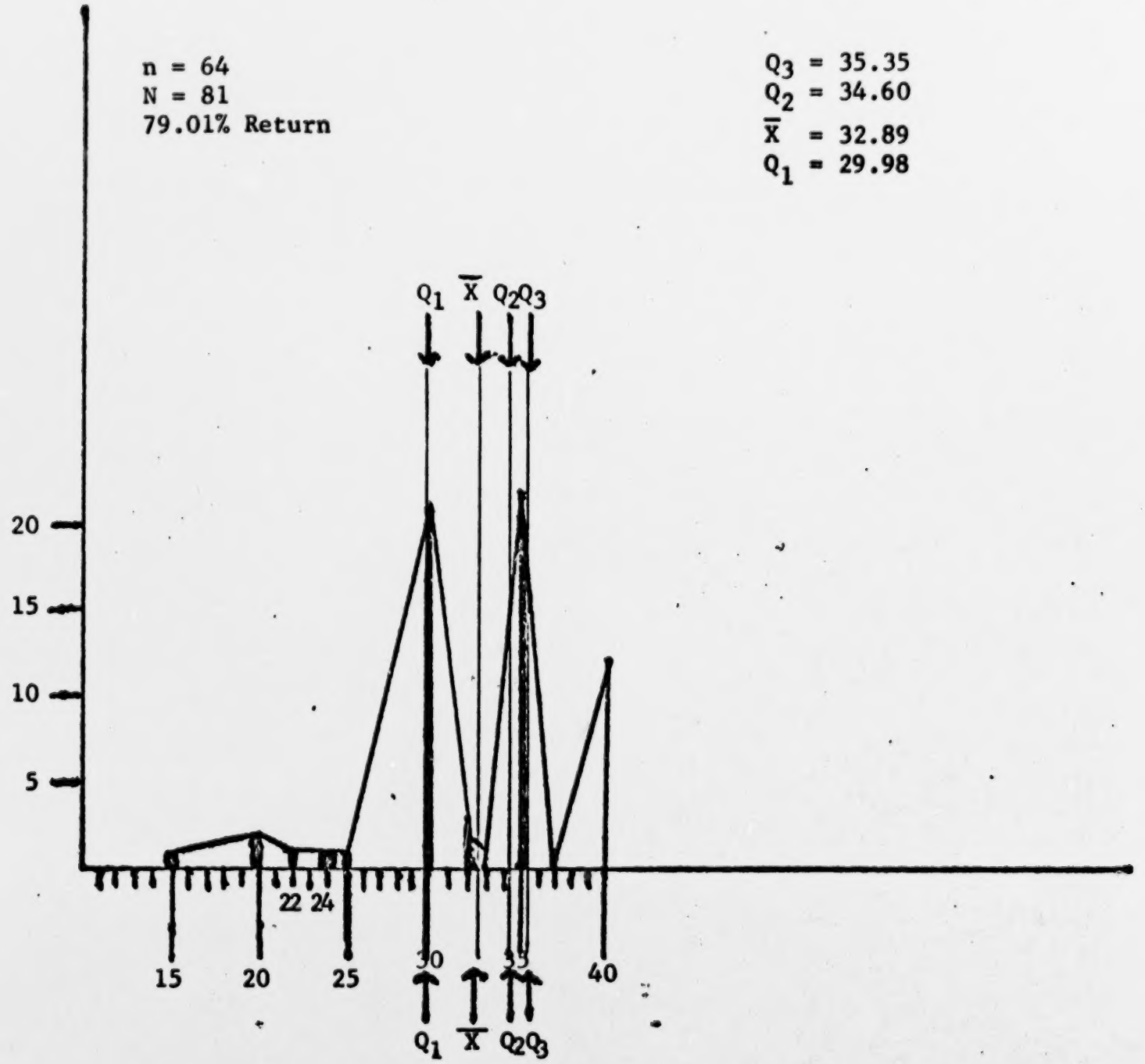
and the individual college responses are shown in Display 1. As the Table and the Display indicate, the range is from 15 hours per week to 40 hours per week. The mean is 32.89. The first quartile Q_1 is 29.98, Q_2 is 34.60, and Q_3 is 35.35.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution for Full-Time Counseling Load
in California Community Colleges

n = 64
N = 81
79.01% Return

Q_3 = 35.35
Q_2 = 34.60
$\overline{X}$ = 32.89
Q_1 = 29.98



In Display 1, the individual college's place is shown relative to the frequency distribution.

Display 1

Counseling Load at Responding Community Colleges

Below Q_1

College	Hours
Napa Junior College	15
Chabot College	24
Contra Costa College (Contra Costa Junior College District)	20
Diablo Valley College (Contra Costa Junior College District)	20
Golden West College (Orange Coast Junior College District)	22
Bakersfield College	25

Above Q_3

College	Hours
Chaffey College	37
Citrus College	40
College of the Desert	40
El Camino College	40
Fullerton Junior College (North Orange County Junior College District)	40
Long Beach City College	40
Mira Costa College	40
Pasadena City College	40
Rio Hondo Junior College	40
Riverside Junior College	40
San Bernardino Valley Junior College	40
Imperial Valley College	40
Victor Valley College	40

Between Q_1 and The Mean

College	Hours
Antelope Valley College	30
College of the Sequoias	30
College of the Siskiyous	30
Compton College	30
College of San Mateo	30
Cuesta College	30
Cypress Junior College (North Orange County Junior College District)	30
Grossmont	30
Harinell College	30
Los Angeles Valley College (Los Angeles City Junior College District)	30
Laney College	30
Merritt College	30
Modesto Junior College	30
Monterey Peninsula College	30
Orange Coast College (Orange Coast Junior College District)	30
Palomar College	30
San Diego City	30
San Diego Mesa	30
San Joaquin Delta Junior College	30
Santa Monica City College	30
Sierra College	30
Merced College	32
Mount San Antonio College	32

Display 1 (continued)

Between The Mean and Q_3

College	Hours	College	Hours
Cerritos College	33	Los Angeles Harbor College (Los Angeles City Junior College District)	35
Allan Hancock College	35		
American River College (Los Rios Junior College District)	35	Los Angeles Pierce College (Los Angeles City Junior College District)	35
Barstow College	35		
Cabrillo College	35	Los Angeles South West (Los Angeles City Junior College District)	35
College of Marin			
East Los Angeles City College (Los Angeles Joint Junior College District)	35	Los Angeles Tech. Trade College (Los Angeles City Junior College District)	35
Fresno City College (State Center Junior College District)	35	Palos Verde College	35
		Reedley College (State Center Junior College District)	35
Glendale College	35		
Los Angeles City College (Los Angeles City Junior College District)	35	Sacramento City College (Los Rios Junior College District)	35
Santa Barbara City College	35	Santa Rosa Junior College	35
San Jose City College	35	Shasta College	35
Southwestern College	35		

Conclusion

It can be seen that the range is quite great. A counselor at one college is expected to work a minimum of fifteen (15) hours while at other colleges a counselor would be expected to work a minimum of forty (40) hours per week. About six colleges, or nine percent of the responding colleges, fell below the first quartile, Q_1, while more than twice that many, thirteen (13) to be exact, fell above the third quartile, Q_3. Of course, most colleges fell between Q_1 of 29.98 and Q_3 of 35.35 -- a difference of about five and one-half (5-1/2) hours per week or one hour per day.

The fact that one-fourth of the colleges had load policies that were lower (below Q_1)

or higher (above Q_3) than most colleges indicates that load policy for counselors is probably more variable than is the load policy for instructors. Fifteen (15) hours per week is generally considered sacrosanct for instructors in the community colleges. Even if five (5) more hours are added to the instructors time schedule for such things as advising and committees, this brings the instructor to only twenty (20) hours per week. It is clear that fifteen (15) to twenty (20) hours per week for an instructor is less than thirty (30) to thirty-five (35) for a counselor. Such discrepancies in load policy for instructors and counselors indicate what might be termed a pervasive attitude that an hour of classroom instruction is approximately one and one-half (1-1/2) to two (2) times as valuable as an hour of counseling. This evaluation may or may not agree with the opinions of the students or of those instructor-counselors who have done both.

One of the problems in the State of California may be traced to the "Fifty percent Law", which states that at least fifty (50) percent of the operating budget must be spent for classroom teaching salaries. Given this law, an administrator may be faced with the decision, "Which do we need most, another counselor or another administrator?" It is unfortunate that counselor's salaries are not counted on the same side of the fifty percent line as are instructors! From an economical standpoint, it is clear that given the same number of counselors, a load policy of forty (40) hours per week forces less outflow of funds for counseling than does a load policy of twenty (20) hours per week. Changing load policy is no doubt more difficult than initially instituting one. The load policy for counselors is definitely in the realm of power politics. Whether a college has a load of twenty (20) or forty (40) hours seems to depend primarily on the political climate at the individual colleges. It is not the intention of this presentation to say

that one load policy is better than another.

It is not intended that this presentation should conclude with a value judgment that states "fifteen (15) hours per week is fair", or "forty hours (40) per week is fair". But with the advent of accountability in community college education, especially as this is manifest in PPBS -- a probable outcome is a reduction in the campus-to-campus variability of the counselor's load. On the other hand, another source of pressure toward a more uniform load policy is the growing tendency of counselors not only to see themselves and their profession as distinct, but also to see the value in cooperative efforts designed to preserve and enhance their status.

Several years in the future a load policy for counselors of a specific number of hours per week may appear to be as sacrosanct as fifteen (15) is now for instructors. Indications are that the present variance in load will diminish over time.